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## Decline of the Indus valley civilization - Transition to the Vedic era

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### Abstract

The beginning of Indian history emerged with the Indus Valley civilisation or the Harappan civilisation between 3500-1700B.C. One of the world's oldest civilisations appeared in the Indus basin. It was called an urban civilisation with a drainage system, citadel and much more. The belief that the Harappans were pre-Aryans cannot be proven because the civilisation had no history of warfare, unlike the Aryans. Dams were made for storing water and for precaution against floods. It is to be noted that there was no evidence of canals for irrigation. According to historians, the flood was one of the reasons for the decline of the Indus Valley.

The fact that they lived for a long time proves their unique way of living. But what led to the decline of the Indus Valley Civilisation? Many factors led to its demise. Still, it was not sudden, their lack of flexibility and non-changeable attributes may have led to the end, and a phase came where the Indus moved to different parts of the world, leaving the civilisation with many unanswered questions.

**Keywords:** Harappa, invasion, Mohenjo-Daro, Aryans, the Saraswati River, urbanization, rig Veda, painted grey ware

### Introduction

Meluha was the ancient name given to Indus. The social life and authority were not rigid, and it seems that the upper town was the ruling class. The lower town was for common people, and the middle settlement was for bureaucrats and middle-class merchants. It is not clear whether hierarchy in settlement corresponded to occupational division or socio-economic differentiation.

### End of a culture

The mature Harappan culture dates back to 2500-1900 B.C. The entire lifestyle was uniform with town planning, seals, scripts, etc. In the ninth century B.C, Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro disappeared completely, and other sites faded gradually.

Historians and scholars have numerous arguments based on geography and evidence; some factors that could be the reason for the gradual end of the culture could be natural calamities, invasion or migration. The Yamuna and the Sutlej moved away from the Saraswati River and the Hakra River around 1700 B.C. Sudden loss of water supply could be a reason when the civilisation depended on the Indus. Scholars mention the dam formation, which followed a massive flood in Mohenjo-Daro. The civilisation may have migrated and eventually brought the end of the culture. But, flood alone cannot end the civilisation when it was spread across such a vast territory.

Trade relations with Mesopotamia were regular since they were contemporary. Indus Valley had its dockyard in Lothal, and it is also the only site where remains of horses were found. Perhaps whether horses were present in Indus Valley can be reasoned by the remains in Lothal. Craft and commerce collapsed because of the sudden end of long-distance land and sea trade with Mesopotamia leading to a shortage of supplies. Decreasing soil fertility could have affected agriculture and disrupted food habits. Scholars and historians have long debated about the Aryan invasion because of the mention of demolished forts in the Rig Veda and the finding of clustered human skeletons at Mohenjo-Daro. Excavations show that skulls and human skeletons found in the mines prove that the population of Mohenjo-Daro was heterogeneous, with four Social types; Prato-Australoid, Mediterranean, Alpinoid and Mongoloid. Aryan was a race believed to be our ancestors, and some scholars mention they were from Europe, Siberia, and Central Asia.

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In the Rig Veda, it is said that Aryans lived a rural life and were not nomadic; they practised agriculture, lived in small villages. They had no concept of dams and irrigation. Hence, the type of agriculture and the type of urban life Indus Valley Civilisation people built was beyond the imagination of Aryans or the Early Aryans.

Many jewellerys were found buried, and skulls were found huddled together at many places such as Kotdiji, Rakhigarhi, Harappa, which proves that Harappans believed in life after death. A new type of axe, dagger, knives with midribs, and flat tongs was found in the upper town of Mohenjo-Daro.

### **The Transition from Harappa to Rig Veda Era**

There was a change from urbanisation to de-urbanisation with the collapse of an era and the disappearance of towns and cities. According to scholars, evidence from the Painted Grey Ware shows that Harappan culture continued in the Gangetic plains and North India after 1900 B.C. Terracotta figures of the same beads were found in the Indus Valley Civilisation. In Chalcolithic culture, Indus continued in Rajasthan, Malwa, Gujarat and Upper Deccan.

A civilisation spread throughout present-day Pakistan, and parts of West India suddenly ended, leaving behind many questions. Harappan writing and scripts have yet to be deciphered. Indus valley was an urban civilisation that marked the beginning of Indian history and the Vedic Era and gave the world a new path.

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